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Youth Sport Influences and the American Development Model: An Analysis

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Youth Sport Influences and the American Development Model: An Analysis

Abstract

Youth sport offers physical, mental, and social health benefits with numerous sport and recreational enterprises and venues offering respective programming of multiple sports. Participation rates of youth in sport and recreational activities, however, are declining. In addition, the age most noted to drop out of youth sport is approximately age 13. Numerous influencers impact participation and retention in youth sport. The current report examines factors impacting youth sport participation, motivation, and retention. The report also showcases seven sport governing body initiatives to strengthen youth involvement in their respective sport and could potentially offer insight to other sporting and recreational activities. The report concludes with several implications for all stakeholders who represent and support youth sport and recreational industries respective to participation, commitment, and loyalty. Future research opportunities are also outlined.

Introduction

Sport is a powerful platform to improve physical, mental, and social health (Fraser-Thomas, Cote, and Deakin, 2008) yet youth participation rates are declining (Eime et al, 2016) with 12% of youth drop out by age 12. Community recreation facilities are important resources in offering youth sport. Furthermore, national governing bodies of major sports have adopted strategies in developing their own youth sports in the future. Most have adopted the American Development Model (ADM), first initiated by the United States Olympic Committee in 2014. The ADM advocates a holistic approach to youth development in sport with a more fun, skill- development, and age-appropriate activities approach to the development of youth sport rather than the traditional focus on excess competition, results, and rankings. Opportunities exist for commercial sport and recreation enterprises to adopt, in full or part, the ADM to improve and enhance their player and participant retention rate, loyalty, and overall longevity in sport, and to offer diverse programming for youth sport and recreation participation. To date, however, there has not been a report outlining junior sport modifications suggested by national sport governing bodies coupled with factors influencing these modifications.

The following report offers commercial recreation and sport enterprises a three-part examination to enhance understanding of the factors that influence youth to continue sport and recreational activities. The first section provides an abbreviated review of factors affecting youth sport and recreation participation, motivation, and retention. Commitment and loyalty are discussed, followed by early specialization burnout and the self-determination theory as related to youth sport. The role of parents, coaches, and mentors influencing youth sport participation and retention is also explored. Next, a summary of sport governing body initiatives and programming are showcased, including USA Hockey, Cricket Australia, USA Football, USA Baseball, USA Basketball, US Soccer and Junior Golf as programming models for youth sport. This report concludes with future considerations, implications, and opportunities for the youth sport and recreation industry.

Variables Influencing Participation, Motivation, and Retention

Commitment and Loyalty

Sport commitment has been defined as the steadfastness to maintain participation in a defined program, specific sport, or sport activity (Scanlan, Carpenter, Schmidt, Simons & Keeler, 1993). Sport commitment is influenced by how the sport makes the participant feel, external options to participate in, and time and energy investments. Casper, Gray, and Stellino (2007) found time, enjoyment, engagement, and social networking within the sport were predictors of sport commitment. Visek et al. (2015) identified 82 determinants of fun for player retention from the perspectives of coaches and parents. Loyalty in youth sport participation, however, is an area of concern for many sports. A study by Fraser-Thomas, Cote, and Deakin (2008) found that up to 66% of participants between 7-18 years of age dropout of sport every year. More recently, a study in the American Academy of Pediatrics Journal posits that by the age of 13, 70% of children leave organized sport (Brenner, 2016).

Fraser-Thomas, Cote, and Deakin (2008) referenced three stages of youth involvement in sport which may increase retention if followed. The sampling stage, 12 and under, encourages children to participate in multiple sports throughout the year. Sports catering to this age group often have flexible rules with leagues designed to maximize enjoyment rather than focus on highly specialized instructions and skill level enhancement. Cote (1999) found fun and developing motor skills were related to commitment for ages 6-12. Additional insight to the sampling state, children's loyalty is often dispersed to multiple sports rather than dedicated to one sport. The specializing stage, ages 13-15, expect kids to narrow down their sport participation to one or two sports if the youth has a goal of higher athletic achievement. Most sports during this stage demand a higher level of loyalty from its participants as compared to their younger aged counterparts, though a full-on committed investment is not commanded. A much greater focus is placed on skill enhancement rather than inherent enjoyment. It is during this stage, particularly at 13 years of age, where the most significant dropout from sport generally occurs (Fraser-Thomas, Cote & Deakin, 2008). The investment stage includes 16-18 year old participants and is often marked by significant investments of time and finances. The investment stage also tends to cost the participants loss of other opportunities, most notably social interactions. In exchange for these heavy investments and costs, participants often hope they will be rewarded with scholarships or professional opportunities. Balish, McLaren, Rainham and Blanchard (2014) suggest that two factors must be prevalent for this higher level of engagement: opportunity and motivation.

Early Specialization Burnout

Junior sports burnout may be a primary reason for youth sport departure. Academic research defines burnout as a cognitive, impassioned, and physical disengagement from a once enjoyed sport due to extreme stress imposed on an athlete over a long duration (Gould, Udry, Tuffey & Loehr, 1996). Research suggests all three factors are prevalent in youth sport, however, much more attention has been given to the mental aspect. Furthermore, sport coaches often seek to identify strong, advanced players at a very young age. Several studies have shown that junior athletes who are introduced to specific, intensive, and specialized training earlier in their career

are more likely to experience burnout and subsequently drop out of the sport (Gould, Udry, Tuffey & Loehr, 1996; Fraser-Thomas, Cote & Deakin, 2008; Wall & Cote, 2007; Baker, Cobley & Fraser-Thomas, 2009). Additionally, Baker, Cobley and Fraser-Thomas (2009) identified four parameters that delineate early specialization; early start age in sport; committed to only one sport at an early age; participates in high intensity training at a young age; and active in sport competition at an early age.

Athletes are often identified as strong candidates for specialization if they are defeating everyone in their age bracket. Many strong and young athletes grow accustomed to winning at an early stage. This dominance builds their confidence and becomes an internal motivator for competitive-minded individuals. However, if they are prematurely thrust into a higher level of competition, where they suddenly represent mediocrity, they will feel as though they already experienced the pinnacle of their performance, causing stress and demotivation. Gould, Udry, Tuffey, and Loehr (1996) found that dropout players were most likely played in an older age division in tournaments than actual age. Fraser-Thomas, Cote, and Deakin (2008) compared engaged teenage swimmers versus dropout swimmers with the developmental years proved to be the key. Dropout swimmers mentioned the specialized skills, always being in the water, and a need to make social choices between practice or another social activity, while engaged swimmers spoke much more positively of their developmental years. A developmental philosophy that included delayed specialization coupled with a concentration on personal development such as leadership skills was much more likely to keep athletes excited and engaged in swimming. This delay in specialization also came with a healthier transition to the next age group; pressure to compete against older peers was not felt as strongly (Fraser-Thomas, Cote & Deakin, 2008).

Establishing peer relationships appears to be one of the most fundamental drivers of youth sport participation and continued sport engagement. When the social benefits of youth sports ceases, dropout becomes much more likely. In a study of female athletes, five of six focus groups mentioned poor teammate relationships and teasing as factors for their sport dropout (Slater & Tiggermann, 2010). Weiss and Smith (2002) depicted a classmate's or teammate's support impacts a youth's emotional well-being, their self-worth, and their motivation. Ages 10-12 are thought to be particularly important in significant friendship development through sport. Friendships, according to Zarbatany, Ghesquiere and Mohr (1992), are expected to provide ego reinforcement, physical admiration, and preferential treatment during competitive experiences. Increased peer acceptance can also lower stress levels that otherwise lead to burnout (Rottensteiner et. al., 2013; Fraser-Thomas et. al., 2008). Ullrich-French and Smith (2009) found that youth who have more than one close friend on the same team or sporting unit has enhanced enjoyment as an athlete.

Lastly, multiple studies have shown the primary reason for adolescent drop out of sports is because they have other things to do (Rottensteiner et. al., 2013; Molinero et. al., 2009; Salguero et. al., 2003; Lindner et. al., 1991; Burton & Martens, 1986; Klint & Weiss, 1986; Gould et. al., 1982). Often times, these "other things to do" will involve activities that offer an increased level of sociability that a specialized or investment stage sport does not offer. Burnout can be avoided by enhancing competence, affiliation, and autonomy in sport, the three inherent needs highlighted in the self-determination theory.

Self-determination Theory

Self-determination-theory suggests that humans have three inherent needs: competence, affiliation, and autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Gagne & Deci, 2005). If all are achieved, then maximum growth potential can be met; if not, then intrinsic motivation is lost (Koestner & Losier, 2002). Therefore, the level of competence, the advanced understanding and skill set to perform well in a sport, will determine the likelihood of continuation in the sport (Vlachopoulos, Karageorghis, & Terry, 2000). Similarly, Zahariadis, Tsorbatzoudis, and Alexandris (2006) noted high self-determination enhances commitment in youth soccer, basketball, volleyball, handball, and water polo while low self-determination reduces their commitment. Balish, McLaren, Rainham and Blanchard (2014) found intrinsic motivation is enhanced when a person's perceived competence has improved. Therefore, a junior athlete must not only comprehend the skills and nuances necessary to perform in a sport, they must also feel as though they are doing so with some form of independence. Crane and Temple (2015) found youth perception of their lack of physical competence was identified as an important correlation for dropout. Slater and Tiggermann (2010) found lack of competence as the main reason for females dropping out of sport. In enhancing competence, affiliation, and autonomy in sport, the parents, coaches, and mentors have critical roles.

Parents as Initial Motivators

The parents' role in sport involvement almost always begins before coaches. Parents often provide the initial opportunities that open a youth's eyes to a sport. Parents play a significant role in shaping sport perceptions in their children's mind by taking them to a baseball game, teaching them to swim in a pool, or watching the US Open with them on television. Fraser-Thomas, Cote, and Deakin (2008) found perceived parental support, encouragement, involvement, and satisfaction are positively associated with enjoyment, intrinsic motivation, and preference for challenge. However, when parents exhibit behaviors detrimental to their children's attitudes toward a sport, they end up being a catalyst for attrition. Gould, Lauer, Rolo, Jannes and Pennisi (2006) found 36% of parents imposed negative influences on their children's development. Some of the most noted reasons were an over-emphasis on winning, harsh criticism, and improbable expectations. Rottensteiner, Laakso, Pihlaja, and Kontinen (2013) found similar results, parental over- involvement, and low amounts of physical and/or social support.

Coaches and Sport Mentors as Role Models

Coaches play ever changing but continuously paramount roles in the progression of their students. In the sampling years, coaches are nurturing, supportive, and look to establish basic levels of sport comprehension. During specialization, a more regimented, character building, competent coach who demands a moderate level of respect from his students is needed. In the investment stage, coaches are expected to be challenging and tough, with a coaching style more specifically focused on advanced skills and strategy. Harwood and Knight (2009) found that during the investment stage parents' roles begin to decrease as coaches play a larger role. Often, teenagers will find themselves spending more time with their coach than their own parents.

Coaches need to know their audiences and consider many factors when developing their training programs. Rottensteiner, Laakso, Pihlaja and Kontinen (2013) suggested up to one-third of youth athletes abandon sports due to a negative coaching experience. Poor coaching can create undesirable self-images, deliver negative feedback in a demotivating way, and take excessive amounts of control of situations. Pelletier, Fortier, Vallerand and Briere (2001), however, found when coaches who were less controlling while giving their athletes more autonomy, athletes were able to enhance their intrinsic motivation, resulting in continued player engagement with their sport. Too often, coaches' sole concentration is on making the best children great, as opposed to facilitating a healthy, social environment for many of the participants. Training programs to help educate coaches on how to establish more enriching relationships with their students have proven to be successful in the past. Ullrich-French and Smith (2009) found players that actively engage in mediation that was structured to strengthen the relationship between coach and athlete exhibited 21% less attrition the following year as compared to no mediation by coaches.

The American Development Model (ADM) for Youth

The ADM is a nationwide model developed by the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) to help children maximize their potential, enjoyment, and longevity in sports (American Development Model, 2018). One of the ways the ADM accomplishes this is through a comprehensive long-term athlete development plan (LTAD) that establishes training, competition, and recovery guidelines for youth athletes based on their biological stage of development to help prevent burnout, injuries, and dropout rates affecting the sport. Intense competition, results, stats, and early specialization were the focus prior to the ADM. Many national sport governing bodies have adopted ADM to overcome the factors leading to burnout and dropout while utilizing the important role of coaches and parents in youth's engagement and commitment to sport.

USA Hockey

USA Hockey has been highly recognized for their efforts in youth sports development and retention as the first governing body to adopt the American Development Model (ADM). Hockey is considered a late specialization sport where athletes do not reach their potential until full growth and maturity. USA Hockey and the ADM encourage children to participate in numerous sports. When players specialize too early, they can experience imbalances in musculature, increasing the potential for burnout and limiting their athletic potential by not developing a broad base of athleticism. (Balyi et. al, 2013). The ADM prioritizes age-specific and age-appropriate training guidelines aligned with a child's stage of development because that is where children develop the foundation of their skills necessary to not only enjoy the sport more, but to also maximize their future potential in the sport. "Play. Love. Excel." (USA Hockey, 2017) is a hockey program embracing the ADM concept assuming the more play and puck time, the better chance that they'll love it. "Play. Love. Excel." is also noted in the cross-ice hockey for eight and under (mite) players, which is played on a smaller rink. This smaller rink allows children to develop skills, increase confidence, and have more fun in the game because their level of engagement and activity drastically increases (USA Hockey, 2017). As

noted, cross-ice hockey provides an array of benefits, including: 2x more puck touches, 2x more pass attempts, 6x more shot attempts, and 5x more passes received as some of its benefits.

Additionally, USA Hockey (2017) initiatives include the 2 & 2 Challenge for youth hockey providers in an effort to increase retention and acquisition in the sport nationwide. The goal of this challenge is to provide youth hockey associations across the country with the blueprint for all related sporting organizations to attract two new players while retaining at least two players from the most recent season for ages eight and younger. For retention, a “Welcome Back Week” is used for volunteers of the association to call and email local families to remind them to sign-up for another season. For acquisition, two separate “Try Hockey For Free Days” are designated to introduce the sport to new players with skill clinics, giveaways, and promotional tools. For conversion, short transitional programs, such as “Learn to Skate” or “Learn to Play”, are used as a low-cost opportunity to encourage parents to get their children more comfortable with the sport.

Cricket Australia

Cricket Australia is another major governing body that has transformed and revitalized its youth development system in an effort to increase retention and participation rates in the sport. Under their traditional model, children were playing in oversized fields, with oversized equipment, and under standard cricket rules that made it more difficult for children to develop their skills, enjoyment, and full potential in the game. The organization decided to conduct a major pilot study with 600+ teams and 6,000 innings throughout the 2016-2017 season to better understand how a modified version of the game impacted engagement, enjoyment, and overall skill development in the sport at the youth level (Cricket Australia, 2017). The study adjusted the pitch length, equipment size (bats and balls), roster size, and boundaries. The results showed that the modifications resulted in 43% more runs off bat, 13% more balls hit, 66% more boundaries hit, 35% less wide and no balls, and 24% less dot balls (Cricket Australia, 2017). The study also found that 87% of participants enjoyed the game more, 76% of parents said their children developed better skills, 74% of clubs enjoyed how game times were shorter, and 89% of coaches said they were better able to coach the game (Cricket Australia, 2017).

Cricket Australia also designed a defined junior pathway to better guide youth athletes on their cricket journey and help them get the most out of the sport. The pathway is broken down into different stages, each with their own modifications and playing formats that progressively guide athletes from the more introductory stages of the game to the more advanced stages based on a child’s ability and progression in the sport. The first two stages, Milo in2CRICKET AND Milo T20 Blast, are great introductions to the sport and help children develop their fundamental skills, confidence, and awareness in the sport in a fun, engaging, and social environment. In fact, in the 2016-17 season, the organization attracted 1.4 million total players, which was a growth of 9.03% from the previous season. An important factor in the growth of the game is the integration of the sport in primary and secondary school curriculum through Cricket Australia’s Sporting Schools program. The program received \$160 million from the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) to help grow the game and in the 2016-17 season, there was a record-breaking 799,939 children playing in schools, which was an 18.4% increase from the previous year (Cricket Australia, 2017).

USA Football

In 2017, USA Football launched a Rookie Tackle pilot study on 11 different youth leagues across the country to explore a more sustainable approach to its youth development system. The Rookie Tackle program is to act as a bridge between flag football and 11- player tackle to not only better introduce children into the sport but to also help children develop the necessary skills to maximize their long-term potential and enjoyment in it (USA Football, 2017). Similar to USA Hockey, the long-term development of children was not prioritized. Children would often jump directly into 11-player tackle from flag football without fully developing their understanding and skills in the game. Rookie Tackle aims to modify the game of football to create a more impactful learning and enjoyment experience. Some of the key game modifications in Rookie Tackle includes smaller fields of 40 x 35 yards, smaller rosters of no more than 8 players, elimination of special teams, and position rotation (USA Football, 2017).

USA Baseball

USA Baseball has developed its own long-term athlete development (LTAD) plan with the help of various researchers, advisory groups, and MLB executives. USA Baseball depicted numerous challenges for amateur players: coaches do not have adequate access to continuing education, an informal pathway up to adolescence age, and rising participation expenses. Furthermore, early specialization in one sport, play throughout the year without designated breaks, and substantially more competition as compared to skill development were noted. USA Baseball (2017) released their LTAD plan devoted to improving player experience, clearer guidelines referencing age-appropriate physical activities, promoting health and safety best practices including discouraging single sport specialization, and encouraging mentor involvement in play. Each stage has its specific set of guidelines for competition, training, and recovery to better address the growing concerns over injury, burnout, and dropout affecting the sport. A key aspect is USA Baseball does not encourage specialization in the sport until the minimum age of 14 since baseball is considered a late specialization sport (USA Baseball, 2017). Instead, the governing body encourages children to play and sample numerous sports before that baseline age because actively engaging in many sports balances the cognitive, psychosocial, physical, and affective environments and to also encourage involvement with peer age groups and adults.

USA Baseball also launched its “Play Ball” initiative and “Fun at Bat” program in 2015 to get children more involved in the sport nationwide and to align with their LTAD. The goal of the “Play Ball” initiative is a simplistic statement that, regardless of the number of available participants and with or without uniforms and referees, the sport of baseball can be played. Modified games with less structure encourages participants to play for fun and enjoyment (Newman, 2015). The initiative’s digital platform provides children, coaches, and parents with the necessary resources to get more involved in the game, such as through “Play Ball” promotional events hosted on select weekends throughout the year. The “Fun at Bat” program is an entry-level program to introduce children between the ages of 5-7 years old to the sport by emphasizing fun, activity, movement, and character development. The program is designed to be implemented in schools, after-school programs, and community organizations.

USA Basketball

USA Basketball formed a collaboration between three working groups specializing in health, wellness, and participation standards to better guide youth athletes with unique training, competition, and recovery recommendations for each age group (USA Basketball, 2015). Youth athletes ages 7 and 8 are recommended to play 20–28 minute games once a week and participate in one 30–60 minute practice session a week (USA Basketball, 2015). Variations of these guidelines are modified for 9th through 12th grade participants. Scheduling too many events, not allowing injured players to properly heal from injuries, and burnout were becoming too common for youth basketball. The following are current recommendations: encourage multisport engagement; sporting activities should be formal and informal; sporting events should be led by youth when applicable; discourage specialization in one sport to age 14 or older; schedule at least one rest day during the week; schedule long breaks to allow disconnect from formal competition; monitor future needs of injury prevention programs and awareness; and education specific for parents and coaches regarding preventions of injury. Moreover, early specialization is discouraged by USA Basketball in favor of encouraging children to play and sample numerous sports as they develop.

USA Basketball also modified the game's standards and rules to better facilitate the proper learning environment for age specific skill development (USA Basketball, 2015). The modifications are based on the age or grade bracket an athlete is playing in and focus on the following key areas: equipment adjustments and court and line modifications; game length, scoring, and game rules modified; and equal court time across all players (USA Basketball, 2015).

U.S. Youth Soccer

In 2015, USA Soccer's mission was to be the leader of sport in the US and to promote soccer development at both recreation and competitive levels. The new player development initiatives (PDI) standards have made it clear that players born between January and December of the same year will play in that same age division. Not only does this align with standards at the international level, but it also makes it clearer which age group a youth player should be playing in. Moreover, the new standards aim to challenge the relative age effect (RAE), which is a phenomenon that argues that players born earlier in the traditional cut-off year had an advantage, especially in terms of selection for top teams over players born later in the calendar year because of their physical and cognitive maturity (US Soccer, 2017). Additionally, US Soccer has changed the format of the game, including field length, goal and ball size, game length, and the number of players on the field, to help children develop their skills, confidence, and intelligence with the ball at a level most appropriate to their stage of development (US Soccer, 2017).

Junior Golf

The Professional Golfers Association (PGA) has numerous junior initiatives to increase participation and retention in youth golf. The PGA Junior League (JLG), for example, unites family and friends for an enjoyable and fun filled golf experience with PGA and LPGA Teaching Professionals. The program is inclusive to both boys and girls, to all skill levels, and offers an

encouraging partner format that promotes sportsmanship, mentorship, and enhances confidence. (PGA Junior League, 2022). The program is part of PGA Reach, a nonprofit organization with the goal of making the sport more accessible to youth, veterans, and diverse populations across the nation (PGA Reach, 2017). In 2016, PGA Reach and Sigma Pi Phi created a partnership to encourage and strengthen racial and ethnic (PGA Jr. League, 2022). In 2017, the program received a \$500,000 grant from the DICK'S Sporting Goods Foundation to go towards scholarships that make the game more accessible to individuals from underprivileged backgrounds (Dicks Sporting Goods, 2019).

The First Tee program, in existence for 25 years, is designed to teach children about core values and character development. The program is dynamic and is offered at golf courses, elementary schools, and afterschool programs across the nation using age-appropriate methods in a fun, safe, and social environment. All programs not only teach children the fundamental skills of the game but prioritize the nine core values of the entire program, which include: honesty, integrity, sportsmanship, respect, confidence, responsibility, perseverance, courtesy and judgment (First Tee, 2022).

Conclusions and Outlook

The aforementioned has numerous implications for stakeholders who represent and support youth sport and recreation industries, particularly with respect to participation, commitment, and loyalty. First, the current report depicted numerous studies identifying influencers of participation, commitment, and loyalty, however, the research is dated. Researchers representing the respective fields have a plethora of opportunities to provide benchmarking for current youth sport and recreational activity influences. Additionally, the current research in respective areas is scarce, at best, coupled with the fact that the pandemic may have either positively or negatively contributed to participation rates of certain sports more than others, given their nature in relation to health and safety risks. For example, the sports of tennis and golf are individual sporting and recreational activities which could be played relatively safely while mirroring health, safety, and distance from others', guidelines. Each may have prospered since early 2020. Consequently, tennis and golf providers may be searching for strategies to retain newly acquired players due to the pandemic. Furthermore, and in contrast to tennis and golf, other sports and recreational activities quite possibly have experienced the opposite. Strategies may need to be explored on welcoming back participants and to also possibly showcase their best practices of current health and safety guidelines implemented.

Second, dropout rates noted in the current report are concerning, given the average age of leaving a sport is approximately age 13. Current research of the above variables listed, including early specialization, self-determination, and more should be investigated, not only due to potential pandemic influences but to note current challenges. Gender should also be more clearly studied respective to drop out rates and influences, in general.

Third, coaches and parents are key stakeholders in youth sport and recreation. Coaches have a critical role in generating positive and enriching experiences for long-term and holistic player and personal development. Future research should explore the impact of coaches and mentors and their respective attitudes and philosophies on youth sport participation, loyalty, and burnout.

Fourth, parents should be thoroughly informed and educated regarding pathway development opportunities, including the rationale behind each programming. A scan of communication channels between coaches and parents should be conducted to enhance relations and to offer their respective contributions in enhancing youth sport and recreation experiences.

Fifth, the current report examined sport governing body pathways and programming that better serve their respective mission and goals. There are a plethora of opportunities regarding the American Development Model for youth as applied to different sport governing bodies. Each should be analyzed and recorded for current benchmarking for the different sports, and respective to age, gender, and additional demographics, as applicable. Additionally, there are new sporting and recreational activities that have become more prevalent in recent years that should be examined as well, including pickleball and padel to name a few.

Sixth, the impact of social media, e-sports, and other sport and recreational activities and non-sport recreational activities on participation, commitment, and loyalty have widespread research opportunities and implementations for youth.

Lastly, sport and recreational organizations should consider examining if there are differences in perceptions between youth and parents/guardians regarding participation interest and their continued involvement. Gaps may be present, and if revealed, should be studied further to better understand the influencers of each individually, how they impact youth and parent/guardian perspectives individually and impact on one another, and how to mitigate them if identified.

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